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BIOGRAPHY

OF

HENRY AUGUSTUS PEIRCE.

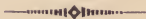


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BIOGRAPHY
OF
HENRY AUGUSTUS PEIRCE.



A. L. BANCROFT & Co., Printers, 721 Market St., San Francisco, 1880.

NOTE.

The author of this biographical memoir derived his knowledge of the subject from an autobiography in manuscript, prepared by Mr. Peirce, with the intention of having it published, a purpose he subsequently relinquished.

SAN FRANCISCO, October 1, 1880.

HENRY AUGUSTUS PEIRCE.

THE early European ancestors of Mr. Peirce were doubtless French; the name in its diverse forms of spelling being early found in prominence in French history. Subsequently the name is found in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, associated with matters of state, and in the army of Great Britain. John Peirce, a subject of the British king and a citizen of London, received from the king of England the first patent to Plymouth colony, dated June 1, 1621. The Pilgrims had arrived at Plymouth in 1620, but no patent or title to the land had yet been given. Captain William Peirce, who commanded the ship *Lion*, of Bristol, and other vessels, brought many of the earliest settlers from England to Plymouth. He resided in Boston, and in 1639 wrote the first almanac made in New England. Michael Peirce, of Hingham, a brother of Captain William Peirce, participated with Miles Standish in the Indian wars in Plymouth colony against the renowned Indian, King Philip, and was distinguished for bravery and patriotism.

Thomas Peirce, the founder of the Peirce family in Massachusetts, came with his wife from England in the year 1634, and settled at Charlestown, Massachusetts. His son, of the same name, settled at Woburn, in Massachusetts, where he married Elizabeth, daughter of Rice Cole; their son Isaac was joined in marriage to Grace, daughter of Lewis Tucker, by Cotton Mather, in 1708. The son of this union, also

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named Isaac, born at Boston in 1722, married Mary Hardy, daughter of Captain Joseph Hardy, of Salem. This Isaac Peirce and his wife had four sons, all of whom participated in the revolutionary war for the independence of America; all having gained distinction for bravery and patriotism. Joseph Peirce, the eldest of the four sons of the last Isaac Peirce alluded to, was the father of Joseph Hardy Peirce, who was born at Boston, March 8, 1773. Joseph Hardy held many important offices in Massachusetts, was secretary of the board of war of that State in 1812-14, clerk of the municipal court of Boston from 1817 to 1829, and held a commission from the State of Massachusetts to Washington upon national affairs. He married Frances Temple Cordis, daughter of Joseph Cordis, of Charlestown, Mass. Both for many years held a prominent position in the highest social circles of Boston, for which their eminent refinement and culture so well fitted them. Seven sons and six daughters were born to them, all of whom lived to maturity, there being still (1880) one son and three daughters living. The wife of Joseph Hardy Peirce died at Boston, April 8, 1815, and in 1819 Mr. Peirce married for his second wife Abby Robinson, of Newport, Rhode Island. There was no issue of this marriage. On December 31, 1831, Mr. Peirce and his wife Abby embarked on board the schooner *Alabama*, at New York, for Mobile; the vessel foundered at sea, and all on board were lost.

Henry Augustus Peirce is the son of Joseph Hardy and Frances Temple Peirce, already alluded to. He was born at Dorchester, now a precinct of the city of Boston, on the fifteenth day of December, 1808. His youth was marked by a delicate constitution and ill health. Until his thirteenth year he attended the public schools in Boston; entering, in 1821, a private academy in that city, where he spent one year. On leaving the academy, and when about fourteen years of age, the lad entered his father's office to assist in the duties of clerk of the court in Boston, presided over by

Judge Thomas Daws, his father's uncle. In this position, by the side of his father, he heard the effective arguments and eloquence of many of the most distinguished lawyers of Massachusetts. The labor of copying and filing papers soon gave him a practical knowledge of business. The withdrawal from school at so early an age, and the consequent incompleteness of his education, is one of the chief regrets of the past life of Mr. Peirce.

In the summer of 1823, the father of Mr. Peirce went to Washington as the agent of the State of Massachusetts for the recovery of claims, and soon was followed by his children, making the voyage by sea on board the ship *St. Peter*, amongst whom were the subject of this sketch and his five sisters, beautiful and accomplished young ladies, who soon held a leading position in the fashionable society of the capital, the whole family returning to their home in Boston the following year, where Mr. Peirce resumed his duties as assistant to his father, devoting, meantime, all of his leisure time to study and the reading of history, voyages, travels, and the classics. With increasing manhood came a strong desire for travel in foreign lands. About this period (1824) his brother Marcus T. received the appointment of master of the brig *Griffon*, owned by the eminent mercantile firm of Bryant & Sturgis, of Boston, to go upon a five years voyage in the fur trade, upon the north-west coast of America, Pacific ocean, California, Oregon, and Alaska. Much against the wishes of many of his relatives, on October 24, 1824, the youth of sixteen years enrolled amongst the ship's crew of the *Griffon*, as a "green hand," before the mast, and sailed on a five years voyage to the North Pacific, under his brother, Captain Marcus T. Peirce, for wages of five dollars per month. The kindly admonitions and prayers of a devoted father, in a most tender letter, handed to the boy as he embarked, with a goodly supply of suitable books upon the subjects of navigation and voyages, added hope and lent consolation in the long days and stormy nights upon the

ocean. Out of a list of seventeen, officers and crew of the *Griffon*, Mr. Peirce is now the sole survivor (1880). After recovery from lacerated hands, incident to the trials of going aloft, and becoming accustomed to the hard fare and rigid discipline of routine sailor drudgery, the voyage became not distasteful, and the good brig *Griffon*, in five months from the day of departure from Boston, arrived at the port of Honolulu, Hawaiian islands, March 25, 1825. The thatch-huts, tropical verdure, and nude natives presented a new and fascinating field of observation for the sailor boy, who, after his five months' practical navigation and close study, had acquired sufficient nautical skill to enable him to navigate a vessel anywhere. Letters of introduction from prominent persons in Boston to members of the American Missionary Board at Honolulu, gave the youth most agreeable recognition in the new and wonderful country. On leaving Honolulu, after a few days' stay in that port, the lad was promoted to "ship's clerk," and was transferred from the forecastle to the cabin, in charge of the stores and goods for trade with the natives. The *Griffon* in due time arrived off the coast of British Columbia, then known as the Hudson's Bay Company's territory, and made her first land after leaving Honolulu by entering the harbor of Chatsena, in Prince of Wales island, on the west side of Clarence's straits. Here an active trade was carried on with the natives, who in great numbers visited the vessel, exchanging furs for articles of commerce. For three and a half years the *Griffon* continued her trading voyage, visiting nearly all the harbors, islands, and straits along the coast of British Columbia and Alaska, between the degrees of fifty-two and fifty-seven north latitude.

During the extended voyage upon the north-west coast, young Peirce had made careful observation and study of the natives, natural resources, climate, and temperature of the country visited, and of the waters navigated, an elaborate record of which he subsequently submitted to Commander Maury, of the hydrographic bureau of the United States

navy, at Washington, from which record emanated the research subsequently made on behalf of the government in relation to a warm ocean current flowing from the China sea and the islands of Japan, to and along the west coast of America.

During the stay of the *Griffon* upon the north-west coast, many startling events transpired in trading with the Indian tribes, but no serious results ensued. The objects of the trading voyage having been attained, the *Griffon*, in September, 1828, sailed from the harbor of Tungas, on the coast of Alaska, for the bay of San Francisco, where she arrived in October following, anchoring off the Presidio, a small Spanish fortification. Besides the *Griffon*, there was but another vessel in port—the brig *Vulture*, Captain Henry D. Fitch; no inhabitants were to be found, except a few at the Presidio and at the Mission Dolores; not even a hut existed at Yerba Buena, where now stands the city of San Francisco. After a stay of a week in port, the *Griffon* hoisted sail for Honolulu, where all arrived safe after ten or twelve days' voyage. Captain Peirce having left the *Griffon* at this port and gone home, young Peirce declined to go with the vessel upon her continued voyage of another year on the north-west coast, and instead entered upon a clerkship in the mercantile house of James Hunnewell, formerly of Charlestown, Mass., residing at Honolulu, where he remained until the fall of 1830, when Mr. Hunnewell returned home, young Peirce continuing the business upon his own account for many years, with great profit.

In February, 1834, the young merchant chartered from King Kamehameha III. the brig *Becket*, built at Salem, Mass., more than twenty years previously, and loading her with sandal wood and other material, sailed for China, to procure a cargo of merchandise suitable for trade in the Russian settlements in Kamtchatka and in the Sandwich Islands. After a voyage of fifty days, young Peirce arrived at Lintin, and at Canton purchased his cargo of merchandise, and in May fol-

lowing left the Chinese coast for Kamtchatka, arriving at St. Peters and St. Pauls harbor early in the month of June. Here he sold a portion of the cargo, taking paper roubles in exchange. Young Peirce and his associates celebrated the Fourth of July, 1834, by giving to the inhabitants of St. Peters and St. Pauls a grand party on board of his vessel. After a stay of two months in Russian waters, the *Becket* proceeded to the Hawaiian Islands, where she arrived after a tedious voyage.

At Honolulu, in the spring of 1835, young Peirce purchased the ship *Rasselas*, and dispatched her upon a voyage of traffic similar to that of the *Becket*. This last venture not proving remunerative, this line of business was abandoned, and in December, 1835, a copartnership was formed by young Peirce and Captain Charles Brewer, who had commanded Peirce's vessels upon their voyages to China and the Russian possessions. Under this partnership the firm of Peirce & Brewer conducted a general merchandise and commission business at Honolulu until the year 1843, when Mr. Peirce retired with an accumulation of one hundred thousand dollars.

In February, 1836, after the establishment of the partnership of Peirce & Brewer, Mr. Peirce sailed on board the firm's schooner *Kamele* for the port of Macao, China, where, after dispatching the *Kamele* with a cargo of Chinese goods to the firm at Honolulu, Mr. Peirce embarked on board the ship *Walter Scott*, for New York, arriving at that port in October following, after a passage of one hundred and fifty days. This was Mr. Peirce's first return to his native land since his departure from Boston harbor, on board the *Griffon*, in 1824; for at the period of his visit to California it was Spanish territory. A few days after his arrival he proceeded to Boston, to the loving associations of his relatives. After a brief sojourn at his old home, he accepted a consignment of the brig *Peru*, carrying twelve guns, and embarked on board of her at Boston, on the nineteenth of January, 1837, for Honolulu, putting into St. Catherines, Brazil, for repairs, after a

run of thirty-six days in the Atlantic. After a most boisterous passage round Cape Horn, the *Peru* arrived at Valparaiso in a hundred and twenty days from Boston, departing in a few days for Callao, Peru. At this time war existed between Chile and Peru, and young Peirce, in conformity with instructions from the owners of the brig *Peru*, made great effort to sell the vessel to either government, but without success.

While at Lima, General Santa Cruz, Protector of Peru and Bolivia, then in supreme command, appointed Mr. Peirce Peruvian Consul at Honolulu, which position he held until 1841, when the brig *Peru*, with Mr. Peirce and some missionary passengers from Boston, bound for Oregon, arrived in the month of July, 1837. After the arrival of the brig *Peru* at Honolulu, she was engaged in running between the principal islands of the Hawaiian group until November, 1837, when she, under the command of Mr. Peirce, sailed for Valparaiso, with a view of the sale of the vessel, touching at the port of Papeete, in the island of Tahiti, one of the Society group, where a few days were spent in observing the beauties and wonders of that delightful tropical region. Soon after the arrival of the *Peru* at Valparaiso she was sold by Mr. Peirce for the owners; her price was taken in pig copper and shipped to the United States.

Mr. Peirce having completed the sale of the brig *Peru*, he now entered upon a journey overland across South America, from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres, crossing the Cordilleras and the pampas on his way to the Atlantic. He left the city of Valparaiso upon this journey on the twenty-sixth of January, 1838, in company with a few others, traveling a portion of the time in a one-horse chaise, and upon horseback, accompanied by spare horses, mules, a *capitan*, and postilions. The grandeur of the snow-capped mountains and the verdure of the expansive valleys lent a charm to this most interesting journey. At Santiago, and all places of importance on the route, all public institutions and places of interest or curiosity were visited. On the afternoon of the seventeenth

of March, 1838, Mr. Peirce and his companions entered the city of Buenos Ayres, which rests upon a wide plain. Remaining in the city of Buenos Ayres two or three weeks, Mr. Peirce embarked for New York on board the bark *Drymo*, arriving at his destination in the early part of June, and in a few days proceeded to his old home in Boston, and was, on the third day of July, 1838, united in marriage with Miss Susan R. Thompson, eldest daughter of the late Joseph Thompson, of that part of Boston called Charlestown, Rev. Dr. James Walker officiating. Mr. Peirce remained in Boston until April 21, 1839, when he, as part owner and as commander of the schooner *Morse*, purchased at Boston, and laden with merchandise for the firm of Peirce & Brewer, of Honolulu, sailed for the latter port by way of Magellan straits and Valparaiso. On the nineteenth of July, after a three months voyage from Boston, the *Morse* entered the straits of Magellan, and after a most stormy and dangerous passage of thirty-two days of the straits, emerged into the Pacific ocean, on the twentieth of August, arriving at Valparaiso in one hundred and thirty days from Boston. Having spent a few days in this port, he sailed for Honolulu, where the *Morse* arrived on the nineteenth of October, 1839, in forty-five days from Valparaiso, and one hundred and eighty days from Boston. During all of this period the business of Mr. Peirce, under the firm of Peirce & Brewer, was going on at Honolulu. But the ill health of Mr. Peirce compelled him to seek a change of climate. With this view, and for the purpose of transacting some business for the firm on the coast of California, the firm of Peirce & Brewer purchased the brig *Maryland*, and Mr. Peirce, in November, 1841, took command of her and sailed from the port of Honolulu, reaching the south Farallones, off the Golden Gate, in seventeen days. The wind blowing a gale from the north, he concluded not to venture a passage into the bay of San Francisco, and headed the *Maryland* for Monterey, the then capital of the Mexican territory of Alta California, where he

arrived on the twenty-fourth of November. Anxious to visit San Francisco, Mr. Peirce embarked on board the Mexican brig *Catalina*, at Monterey, and arrived at Yerba Buena November 30, 1841, thirteen years having elapsed since his previous arrival in October, 1828. But five or six huts or houses now stood at Yerba Buena, where not one stood upon his visit in 1828. Here Mr. Peirce learned that a United States exploring expedition, under the command of Captain Wilkes, had recently visited the place and had surveyed the bay of San Francisco and the Sacramento river, and that Governor Alvarado had caused a survey to be made of the pueblo of Yerba Buena, and that fifty and one-hundred vara lots could be had at twenty to thirty dollars. Mr. Peirce, not doubting the future greatness of California, could not be persuaded to invest or remain. A few extracts from a letter written to his friend, Thomas Cummins, at Honolulu, on board the brig *Maryland*, on February 1, 1842, after leaving California, will best convey Mr. Peirce's conceptions regarding the then remote Spanish colony. He says:

"I made many notes in respect to California. From San Diego to Bodega it possesses the richest land and the most salubrious and healthful climate of any country that I am acquainted with; in climate and productions it bears a near resemblance to the south of Spain. It produces the grape, olive, fig, orange, lemon, pomegranate, and other tropical fruits. Cotton, silk, and the sugar cane can be grown. The northern parts of California possess the finest wheat and grazing lands your eyes ever beheld. * * * In spring, here Nature puts on her brightest robes; the whole country is one vast bed of flowers, delightful to the eye and pleasing to the senses. In my opinion California will become, in its future history, a second Texas. Emigration from Missouri and New Mexico is rapidly taking place. * * * All are pleased with the lands and the climate. * * * The country is overrun with immense quantities of game of all kinds, geese, ducks, deer, etc. I have not a doubt, from what I have seen and know, that in less than six years more than fifteen thousand persons will have emigrated to California from

the Western and North-western States; when that time comes, we shall, I hope, see the country governed by our own enlightened laws, and the people speaking our own language; and should that time arrive, as I expect, when these things are to happen, I shall feel a strong disposition to come out and settle there myself."

Having at this time visited many points north of the bay of San Francisco, and taken copious notes of the region, Mr. Peirce left Yerba Buena on board the *Don Quixote*, of Hawaii, for Monterey, where he again took command of his vessel, the brig *Maryland*, on January 3, 1842, arriving at Santa Barbara three days later. Leaving Santa Barbara, the *Maryland* sailed for San Diego, where she arrived on the eighteenth of January; where, after remaining a few days, she sailed for Mazatlan, Mexico, where she arrived on the fourth of February, 1842. Mr. Peirce had, in all his stopping-places along the coast, traded for hides, furs, and other articles, and, on arriving at Mazatlan, disposed of the *Maryland*, sending her to Honolulu in charge of his mate, to be delivered to her purchasers. Mr. Peirce in a few days embarked on board the schooner *Victoria*, for San Blas, where he arrived three days later, and departed upon a journey overland, across Mexico to the Atlantic, on his homeward travels passing through Guanajuata, Queretaro, and many other places of importance, and on the first day of March, 1842, arrived in the city of Mexico, where pleasant intercourse with the leading officials and the American minister, with observations of the many objects of interest to a stranger, occupied four days, leaving the city of Mexico on the fourth of March for Vera Cruz. Arriving at the latter city, Mr. Peirce embarked on board the French ship *Atlantic*, for Matanzas, Cuba, arriving at the latter place after a voyage of twenty-two days. From Matanzas Mr. Peirce went to Havana, from whence in a few days he took passage on board a schooner bound to Charleston, South Carolina. From Charleston he took steamer to Wilmington, North Carolina, and from thence by land to the city of

Washington, where he visited Daniel Webster, Secretary of State, urging upon him action upon the matter of Americans whom upon his (Peirce's) travels he found prisoners in Mexico for supposed political offenses. At this interview Mr. Peirce imparted much information to the distinguished secretary, in relation to the territory of California, and intimated that "in the fitness of things, we must have California." To which Mr. Webster replied: "Well, sir, if we *must*, we probably will!" After a brief sojourn in Washington, Mr. Peirce proceeded on to his old home in Boston and joined his family, after an absence of three years. During all of the years from 1842 to 1849 Mr. Peirce was largely engaged in commerce and in foreign trade in Boston, being a ship-owner and trading with Hawaii and the Society Islands, Kamtchatka, China, and Manila. In 1847 he chartered to the government of the United States the ship *Charles*, to carry a cargo of provisions to Monterey, California, for the United States forces there. Mr. Peirce, in the midst of an active commercial life, left Boston in 1844, on a visit to Europe, visiting London, Paris, and other great cities.

News of the discovery of gold in California having reached Boston in the fall of 1848, Mr. Peirce, in connection with James Hunnewell, of Boston, fitted out the ship *Montreal* with a cargo of merchandise for San Francisco, the vessel sailing on the nineteenth of January, 1849, with Mr. Peirce as supercargo. Fleets of vessels were now on the way from all quarters of the globe, bound for San Francisco. The *Montreal* arrived at Valparaiso in ninety days from Boston. Here Mr. Peirce's business sagacity induced him to sell at high figures most of the cargo of his ship, to be delivered at San Francisco. The vessel, on leaving Valparaiso, proceeded to Honolulu, where, discharging a portion of her cargo, she sailed for San Francisco, where she arrived in July, 1849. At this period more than two hundred vessels of different nations lay in the bay of San Francisco. On the arrival of the *Montreal*, her entire crew deserted her and de-

parted for the mines, leaving Mr. Peirce and the captain alone. In September, 1849, Mr. Peirce, on board the *Montreal*, sailed out of the Golden Gate for Honolulu, from whence he dispatched her soon after with a cargo of oil and whalebone to New Bedford, and in November following he embarked on board the brig *Noble*, chartered by him at Honolulu, and sailed for Canton, China, for a cargo of general merchandise for the Hawaiian trade. The vessel on her voyage touched at the island of Kauai, the most western of the Hawaiian archipelago, where, near the harbor of Nawiliwili, he purchased, in connection with the late William L. Lee, Chief Justice of the Hawaiian Kingdom, a sugar plantation of three thousand acres, leaving competent parties in charge, and proceeding on to China. This sugar enterprise resulted most disastrously as a speculation. On Christmas, 1849, the *Noble*, with Mr. Peirce, arrived at Hongkong. On the following day Mr. Peirce took passage upon an English steamer for the city of Canton. In due time the *Noble* returned to Honolulu with her cargo, which was sold at great profit to those concerned.

Always active and keen for speculation, Mr. Peirce, seeing the opening for Chinese goods in San Francisco, communicated his views to the firm of Russell & Co., who dispatched the brig *Eagle* for San Francisco, laden with Chinese goods; in this venture, Mr. Peirce had a quarter interest. The goods sold at San Francisco at a satisfactory profit. After settling his business at Canton, Mr. Peirce sailed on board the ship *Oriental* for New York city, where he arrived after a passage of eighty-three days, arriving a few days thereafter, in April, 1850, at his home in Boston, having circumnavigated the globe in the last fifteen months of his absence, and returned to the happy circle of his wife and two children, crowned with financial success.

Soon after Mr. Peirce's return from China to Boston, he, with James Hunnewell and Charles Brewer, with their united capital, entered upon a partnership for commercial voyages

from Boston to Honolulu and San Francisco. This association lasted for four years, during which more than half a million dollars were constantly employed, and a fleet of ships engaged, traversing the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and bringing increasing wealth to their enterprising owners, a loss of thirty thousand dollars in the fire at San Francisco of May 4, 1851, on goods in the hands of their agents, being the only loss of consequence sustained.

For the period from 1850 to 1861 Mr. Peirce was a prominent and prosperous merchant and ship-owner of Boston, and from 1852, for a period of fifteen years, he resided with his wife and two children at their elegant residence, No. 46 Beacon street, Boston, purchased from his uncle, Thomas Cordis, esq., where he enjoyed all the social pleasures of the most refined society of that city. During the period from 1856 to 1869 he was consul for the Hawaiian kingdom at the ports of Boston, Mass., Portsmouth, N. H., and Portland, Me.

In the year 1857, Mr. Peirce dispatched the bark *Messenger Bird* with a cargo of merchandise to the Russian settlements at the Amoor river. The commencement of the civil war, in 1861, found Mr. Peirce with a fleet of ships scattered in peaceful commerce upon every sea. The subsequent disasters to this class of property seriously affected his financial affairs; following in the wake of which came the robbery of fourteen thousand dollars from a bank by a confidential clerk, and forgeries to the extent of an additional forty thousand dollars. But neither the spirit nor the integrity of the shrewd merchant, trader, and navigator was shaken, but with active patriotic zeal he entered upon aiding his afflicted country, devoting his time and means to the cause of her preservation, assisting in recruiting and sending into the field from Boston, regiments of soldiers, among which may be named the ninth, fourteenth, twelfth, and the fifty-third and fifty-fourth colored, co-operating actively with Governor Andrews and other patriots of Massachusetts.

After the capture of Charleston, South Carolina, in 1865,

Mr. Peirce, having obtained a permit from the secretary of war, in company with William Lloyd Garrison, Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Tilton, and George Thompson, the famous English abolitionist, visited Port Royal and Fort Sumter. While at Port Royal Mr. Peirce was the guest of his old friend, Admiral William Reynolds, whom he had known at Honolulu in 1840. This was upon the fourteenth day of April, 1865, just four years after the surrender of Fort Sumter, and the occasion upon which General Anderson hoisted over the retaken fort the flag of his country, which he had been compelled to lower on the fourteenth of April, 1861.

On the return of Mr. Peirce and his patriotic associates next day (April 15, 1861) to Port Royal, they learned the sad news of the assassination of President Lincoln. Returning to New York city on the *Sua Nada*, in a few days Mr. Peirce witnessed the solemn funeral procession bearing the remains of President Lincoln to their resting-place at Springfield, Illinois.

The adversity of war and the almost total destruction of shipping, incident to rebel pirates, left Mr. Peirce, in 1866, deprived of the greater part of his large fortune, secured by long years of close application, shrewd speculation, and extensive voyages to almost every portion of the mercantile world. Despairing of recovery in his past line of pursuits, and anxious to demonstrate the practicability of the free labor of the emancipated colored people of the South, he, in company with his old friends R. B. Forbes and John P. Cushing, of Boston, purchased the Scotland plantation, on the Big Black river, Yazoo county, Mississippi, paying thirty-five thousand dollars for the plantation and all its improvements and live stock. The freedmen were hired, and, under skilled superintendents, employed in raising cotton; but, owing to defective levees, unusual climatic changes, and other causes, at the close of the season, after an expenditure of ninety thousand dollars, this agricultural venture yielded ninety-two bales of cotton, which sold for five thousand dol-

lars. At this time social disorder reigned supreme in Yazoo county and vicinity. Between the disastrous cotton speculation and the nightly raids of "jayhawkers" and "bushwhackers," upon the horses and mules of the plantation, little remained to induce Mr. Peirce to expedite a sale of his most unremunerative agricultural property. Intent upon release at any sacrifice from his Yazoo cotton plantation, Mr. Peirce visited New Orleans and found a purchaser for his property, at a clear loss of forty-nine thousand dollars. The addition of this misfortune to the great depression of the shipping interests began to melt from sight the accumulations of all his past success, and Fortune in her most fickle moods seemed to thwart his every effort. The elegant mansion at 46 Beacon street, Boston, so long the happy home of his family and the center of social refinement, was sold, realizing eighty-five thousand dollars, with a portion of which all demands against Mr. Peirce were paid off, the balance being invested in a more unpretentious residence on Chestnut street, in the rear of Beacon street. Through every phase of these unforeseen disasters, the moral integrity of Mr. Peirce, and the purity of his motives in all commercial and business transactions, have never suffered a shadow of doubt or reproach to rest upon them.

Mr. Peirce, now out of business, and residing with his family in their retired home in Boston, having, in May, 1869, received a commission from the State department at Washington, as minister resident at the Hawaiian Islands, once more directed his steps toward the far Pacific, the early scenes of his youthful activity and commercial success, and on June 7, 1869, left Boston by the overland railroad for San Francisco, *en route* for Honolulu, arriving at the former place on June 15, 1869, twenty years having elapsed since his last visit to that city (1849), and more than forty years since his first visit in 1828, during which time a great commercial city had arisen upon the sands of Yerba Buena, more than fulfilling his predictions of a quarter of a century before. During

Mr. Peirce's stay of a fortnight in San Francisco, he studied carefully the commercial advantages and requirements of the city, and its relative commercial importance in relation to trade with Hawaii and the Orient.

Vested with the diplomatic authority of minister of the United States, Mr. Peirce left the harbor of San Francisco on board the American ship *Rival* for Honolulu, where, on the twenty-fifth of March, 1825, he had first landed as a sailor boy on board of the brig *Griffon*, and where he had spent so many subsequent years in active commercial and friendly relationship with the people. On the sixteenth of July, 1869, on his arrival at Honolulu, he was received with the warmest demonstrations by the inhabitants, who gave him a hearty welcome to the scene of his early commercial prosperity. On the nineteenth of July, 1869, the new minister to Hawaii was granted an official audience with King Kamehameha V., to whom he presented his credentials to the Hawaiian court, which were received by the king with marked declarations of personal regard for the newly-appointed representative of the American Republic—the old and esteemed friend of the king's predecessors and people.

During the period of Minister Peirce's residence at Honolulu, from July, 1869, to September, 1877, he exerted not only upon the commercial relations of Hawaii and the United States most beneficial influence, but, through his far-seeing and energetic efforts, brought the two nations into close and friendly diplomatic intercourse, binding the people and governments and commerce in mutual reciprocal relations, such as only could have been comprehended and accomplished by such knowledge of the condition of both governments and people as had been acquired by years of active and friendly intercourse with the government and people of Hawaii.

The active and efficient efforts of Minister Peirce in his official duties with the State department at Washington, and his prompt aid and attentions to his countrymen in distress upon the Pacific islands, received the heartiest expressions of

recognition and commendation from the government of the United States. During the residence of Mr. Peirce as minister of the United States at Honolulu, he witnessed many important changes in the government and affairs of Hawaii. The death of King Kamehameha V. on the eleventh day of December, 1872, ended the reign of the line of that king's predecessors, he being the last of his race in descent from the great Kamehameha I. He died without naming his successor. The assembly at Honolulu, on February 6, 1873, elected Prince William Lunalilo king. His reign ended within a year; he died on the third of February, 1874. He also declining to nominate his successor, on the twelfth day of February, 1874, the assembly of Hawaii elected Kalakaua king. At the announcement of his election the populace arose, and entering the council chamber, dispersed the assembly, gutting all the government offices, and inaugurated a reign of general destruction and slaughter. The native police and authorities seemed powerless. But the vigilant American minister, who had anticipated trouble, and had been invited into the chamber to witness the voting, had cautiously placed under arms the marines on board the United States frigates *Tuscarora* and *Portsmouth*, lying in the harbor, and in fifteen minutes after the riotous demonstration in the assembly, Mr. Peirce brought one hundred and fifty armed Americans into the assembly chamber, and put to flight the rioters and restored order, retaining, at the solicitation of the officials of the government, his marines for a period of seven days in protecting life and property. For these acts Mr. Peirce received the thanks of the king and his government.

The government at Washington having extended an invitation and transportation to King Kalakaua, of Hawaii, and placing the United States steamer *Benicia*, then at Honolulu, at the disposal of the king and his suite, they embarked at Honolulu on November 17, 1874, for San Francisco, *en route* for Washington, accompanied by Minister Peirce, the invited

guest of the king. The *Benicia* arrived at San Francisco on November 28, after a passage of eleven days from Honolulu. The royal party and Mr. Peirce left San Francisco for Washington on December 5, and reached the latter place on December 12. At Washington, the king and his suite and Mr. Peirce remained the guests of the government. The arrival of the Hawaiian king was the first visit of a sovereign to the United States.

Mr. Peirce remained with the royal party during its stay of several weeks in Washington, and accompanied it to New York city, from whence he visited his old home in Boston in advance of the king, where a grand reception was tendered the party. Mr. Peirce, meantime, on the eleventh of January, 1875, arrived in Washington, to forward the political and commercial relations of his government with Hawaii, particularly in relation to the reciprocity treaty of September 9, 1876, news of the signing of which was received at all ports of the Hawaiian kingdom with unbounded enthusiasm. The treaty has proven most beneficial to both countries. From the city of Washington Mr. Peirce proceeded to St. Louis, where he joined the Hawaiian king and party, and leaving them after a brief sojourn, arrived by rail at San Francisco, on his return to Honolulu, on January 26, 1875, where they embarked on board of the United States steamer *Pensacola* on February 2, and arrived at Honolulu thirteen days later. On the arrival of the royal party at home a banquet was given by the king in the garden of the palace, where the king, in recognition of the personal worth and high services rendered by Mr. Peirce in promoting the political and commercial welfare of the Hawaiian kingdom, proceeded to invest him with the high honor of the order of Grand Commander of Kamehameha. The official position of Mr. Peirce would not permit his acceptance; but the king, still impressed with his debt of gratitude to the American minister, after Mr. Peirce had resigned his office, in October, 1877, conferred

upon him the order, which Mr. Peirce then accepted. Mr. Peirce remained at Honolulu, discharging his high official duties with marked ability and satisfaction, until October 25, 1877, upon which day he sailed on board the United States steamer *Jamestown*, for San Francisco, having, on the twenty-fourth of June preceding, resigned his position as United States minister to Hawaii, to take effect upon the arrival of his successor.

The departure of Mr. Peirce from Hawaii was the occasion of widespread regret by the native and foreign population, and brought forth from every class marked expressions of the highest esteem. The address of the king upon the occasion of Mr. Peirce's withdrawal as minister from his court will convey the cordial relations existing between Mr. Peirce and the people and government from which he was separating. The king said:

"Mr. Peirce: I have received with regret the information that your official duties as United States minister resident in this kingdom are now to cease in consequence of your recall from that mission. Your official intercourse with myself and with my royal predecessors and with the officers of this government, during the period of over eight years in which you have held this office, has been marked in a rare and most felicitous degree, not only with the dignity and firmness requisite in presenting your views and those of your government upon public and private international matters, but with a discretion and a spirit of conciliation and courtesy which has usually prevented and always removed all unnecessary obstacles to mutual understanding and accord. Your long residence here in former years as one of our leading merchants, and your personal acquaintance with the sovereigns, chiefs, and people of this kingdom, and with the capabilities as well as the wants of this country, have not failed to serve most important ends in facilitating official intercourse during your incumbency, and in enabling you to arrive at safe and just conclusions. If, as I believe, the commercial interests, not only of my subjects but of our respective countries, and of all others having commercial relations with this kingdom, or business or prop-

erty connections here, are largely enhanced by the operation of the convention of reciprocity, the result may largely be attributed to your intelligent and well-directed efforts in promoting that compact. I thank you for your kind expressions of good wishes for myself and my subjects. Be assured that you will always have my sincere regard, and my desire for your continued happiness and prosperity. You will always have the consciousness of faithful performance of public and private duties, and the public recognition from all who have known you here of those qualities which deserve and bring 'honor, love, and obedience, and troops of friends.' "

On October 25, 1877, Mr. Peirce left Honolulu, taking a last farewell of the scenes of his long and most varied career, and after a passage of twenty-three days on board the *James-town*, on November 17, 1877, he arrived at San Francisco, on his way to his birthplace in Massachusetts; but the inclement season in the Atlantic States, and the sudden change from the genial climate of Honolulu to the rigid winter of New England, induced him to remain a time in San Francisco; but, as the most simple seeming circumstances often change the whole current of prearranged plans, so in Mr. Peirce's cases. Soon after his arrival in San Francisco he was attacked with a severe cold, which, threatening serious results, induced him to seek until spring the mild climate from which he had just departed, and, retracing his course, he set sail for Honolulu, where he arrived on board the steamer *Zealandia*, on January 8, 1878. His voyage had completely restored his health, and his return opened up a new and unforeseen event in his career. Towards the close of February of the same year, and just as Mr. Peirce was about to return to San Francisco, King Kalakaua appointed him minister of foreign affairs for the Hawaiian kingdom, upon the discharge of the duties of which he entered on the first day of March, 1878. Mr. Peirce's strong desire to advance the political and commercial interests of the United States in Hawaii induced him to accept the new service; besides, he

strongly desired to enjoy the delightful climate in which he had spent so many years of active life; but, as in the earlier career of Mr. Peirce, events were developing which, unseen by him, were preparing sudden and unexpected changes, and were destined to sever his connection forever with the people and climate to which he felt strong attachment. On the thirtieth of April, one month after the minister had entered upon his duties, the Hawaiian assembly entered upon a violent and groundless attack upon the cabinet ministers of the kingdom, and although a "want of confidence" was defeated by a vote of seven, yet the king, to allay the seeming lack of confidence in his cabinet, and to retain the support of the legislative branch of his government for public and private appropriations, sacrificed his ministers, who, upon the request of the king, surrendered their offices on the first of July following. Thus closed, after the brief period of four months, another eventful chapter in a most eventful life.

Mr. Peirce, impressed with the cowardice and bad faith of the king towards his deposed cabinet officers, determined to leave the islands, and in the latter part of July, 1878, sailed from Honolulu for San Francisco, where he arrived on the sixth of August following, and soon after proceeded by rail to his old home in Boston, returning to San Francisco overland in November following, where Mr. Peirce has established his permanent home, and where he has ever since resided.

Two children were born to Mr. Peirce: his daughter Ella Augusta, born October 3, 1839, resides with her husband, Frederick Clapp, esq., at Greenfield, Mass.; his son, Henry Marcus, born November 23, 1846, while a student at Harvard college, gave great promise of future intellectual activity; but, in his twentieth year, the cloud of disease blighted the bud of promise, and immured in an asylum the father's hope. In that sad event, in which the curtain of oblivion obscured the reason of a loved son, is recorded the saddest page in the eventful life of one of the earliest pioneers of the Pacific

coast. And now, with the frosts of more than seventy years whitening the locks of this extraordinary man, he looks out upon the former scenes of his earliest activities alone, seeking in the midst of crowding memories of the past, and through the deep shadow that excludes his darling son, the approach of other and more enduring shores, upon which to voyage in the bosom of perpetual repose.

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